

same area from day one and also had a couple of favoured perches. A horizontal branch of a small mango tree, about a metre from the ground was the first favoured perch; the second being a hammock placed for tourists just outside the dining area. I asked Mahinder Singh to keep a close watch on the bird every day and record the sightings, as I had to leave for Kanha in a couple of days. I returned to Bandhavgarh on March 9, 2002. The bird was still seen around the same area using the same old favoured perches, the only difference was that it had become bolder and allowed us to watch it from a distance of less than 3 m. A friend of mine even photographed the bird from close quarters. The bird eventually left Bandhavgarh around mid March 2002 and was not seen after that.

According to Ripley (1982) and Grimmett *et al.* (1998),

the Orange-gorgeted Flycatcher (*Ficedula strophilata*), is an altitudinal migrant that breeds in the Himalaya from Himachal Pradesh to Arunachal Pradesh and NE India and winters in the foothills up to c. 2400 m. Till date, there is no record of the bird being sighted from anywhere in the Peninsula. The sighting of this bird at Bandhavgarh in central India and its prolonged stay, for almost three months, is the first record of this species for peninsular India.

November 8, 2003

E.P. ERIC D'CUNHA  
Wild Chalet Resort,  
Kanha National Park,  
P.O. Kisli, District Mandla 481 768,  
Madhya Pradesh, India

#### REFERENCES

RIPLEY, S.D. (1982): A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Bombay Natural History Society, Oxford University Press.

GRIMMETT, R., C. INSKIPP & T. INSKIPP (1998): Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. London: Christopher Helm Ltd.

### 7. OCCURRENCE OF GREY-HEADED CANARY FLYCATCHER *CULICICAPA CEYLONENSIS* (SWAINSON) IN JAMNAGAR DISTRICT, GUJARAT, INDIA

While surveying parts of Jamnagar district in Gujarat for some rare and endangered plant and animal species, we sighted a Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*). The bird was calling from a small patch of *Acacia nilotica* forest on the leeward side of the main bund of Ranjitsagar Dam in Jamnagar. We saw the bird busy feeding along with five Oriental White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) and a Common Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*).

The Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher is said to be a common resident, which migrates; it spends winter in southern India and summer in the north (Kazmierczak and Singh 1998). It is said to stay in the Himalaya (up to c. 3000 m) and NE hill states, and Bangladesh, winter in the Eastern and Western Ghats in India and Sri Lanka, and almost the entire Subcontinent (Ali and Ripley 1995; Ali 1996). In addition, Ali (1996) mentioned that the bird is practically found in the entire Indian Union, Bangladesh and Pakistan (except the arid north-west portions), resident and local migrant with the species extending its range eastwards to China and south to Malaysia. According to Grimmett *et al.* (1999), this species is a resident, which breeds in the Himalaya, hills of India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and winters in the Himalayan foothill and plains of Pakistan, and E and NE India.

Earlier, this species had been sighted in Mandvi Taluka in Kachchh (Himmatsinhji 1958), an arid part of India. Our

sighting is the first record of this species in the arid part of Jamnagar district in Gujarat (Photographic evidence provided - Eds). The bird was alone and was sighted in a very small patch of *Acacia nilotica* thorn forest next to an orchard and agriculture lands. It is said to be found in deciduous or evergreen forest, sholas, secondary and mixed bamboo forest (Ali and Ripley 1995; Ali 1996) and in forest and wooded areas (Grimmett *et al.* 1999).

August 25, 2003

JUSTUS JOSHUA  
HIREN SONI<sup>1</sup>  
NISCHAL M. JOSHI  
PANKAJ N. JOSHI  
OSWIN DEIVA  
Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology,  
Post Box # 83, Opp. Changleshwar Temple,  
Mundra Road, Bhuj-Kachchh,  
Gujarat 370 001, India.

<sup>1</sup>Present Address: Animal Sciences (Zoology),  
Ashok & Rita Patel Institute  
of Integrated Study in Biotechnology (ARIIBT),  
New Vallabh Vidyanagar 388 121,  
Gujarat, India.  
Email: hirensoni@yahoo.com

## REFERENCES

- ALI, S. (1996): The Book of Indian Birds. Bombay Natural History Society and Oxford University Press, Bombay. Pp: 56, 268.
- ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1995): A Pictorial Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Bombay Natural History Society and Oxford University Press, Bombay. Pp. 148.
- HIMMATSINHJI, M.K. (1958): More bird notes from Kutch. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 55(3): 575-576.
- GRIMMETT, R., C. INSKIPP & T. INSKIPP (1999): Pocket Guide to the Birds of Indian Subcontinent. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Pp. 240.
- KAZMIERCZAK, K. & R. SINGH (1998): A Birdwatcher's Guide to India. Prion Ltd. Sandy. Devon. U.K. 334 pp.

8. LARGE PIED WAGTAIL *MOTACILLA MADERASPATENSIS* GMELIN IN LADAKH

On the morning of July 7, 1999, two adult Large Pied Wagtails *Motacilla maderaspatensis* were observed on the bank of the Indus river near Likeer on the Srinagar-Leh highway. The birds were easily identified, as the species is familiar to the observers. This is a new sighting for Ladakh, extending the species distribution further north. There are no previously documented records of the species from Ladakh to the best of our knowledge. Ali and Ripley (1998), Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak and van Perlo (2000) do not mention this area in the species distribution for the Indian subcontinent.

The altitudinal range of the species for the Indian subcontinent is "up to c. 900 m (Sikkim) and locally 1500 m (Garhwal, Kulu) or 1700 m (Nepal – Diesselhorst); in the hills

of southern India up to 2200 m" (Ali and Ripley 1998). The site where the birds were observed is at an altitude c. 3000 m, which considerably exceeds the known range of 2200 m.

August 25, 2003

HARKIRAT SINGH SANGHA  
B-27, Gautam Marg, Hanuman Nagar,  
Jaipur 302 021, Rajasthan, India.  
Email: sangha@datainfosys.net

RISHAD NAOROJI  
Godrej Bhavan, 4-A, Home Street,  
Mumbai 400 001, Maharashtra, India.  
Email: rnaoroji@vsnl.com

## REFERENCES

- ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1998): Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Vol. 10, Second edn. Oxford University Press, Delhi. Pp. 300-302.
- GRIMMETT, R., C. INSKIPP & T. INSKIPP (1998): Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Christopher Helm. London. Pp. 813.
- KAZMIERCZAK, K. & B. VAN PERLO (2000): A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Pica Press, Robertsbridge, U.K. Pp. 285-286.

9. GANGES SOFTSHELL TURTLE *ASPIDERETES GANGETICUS* (CUVIER)  
ATTACKING A MALE PEAFOWL *PAVO CRISTATUS*

The Ganges Softshell Turtle *Aspideretes gangeticus* is present in many water bodies of southern Rajasthan (Sharma 2000, 2002); Madar dam near Udaipur City is one of them. Due to repeated drought, water in dams and ponds in the area is declining fast; even big water bodies like Madar dam are becoming unsafe for the Turtle.

On May 18, 2001, I was checking the availability of water and safety aspects of *A. gangeticus* at Madar dam. While scanning the drying bed of the dam in the morning, I saw a male Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* drinking at the periphery of a burrow pit, present in the bed of the dam. Since this was not a strange or new event I ignored it and started looking at another site of the dam. After a lapse of few seconds, an unusual wing flapping action of the Peafowl drew my attention. I observed the bird through my binoculars and found that a large *A. gangeticus* had caught hold of the Peafowl's neck and was trying to pull the bird into the water. The Peafowl was trying its best to get out of the turtle's grip.

After a short struggle, the bird became motionless. I did not disturb the turtle and left the site. The next morning, I reached the dam and minutely checked the dead bird. A big portion of the neck of the bird was missing.

The Ganges Softshell Turtle is an omnivorous species and its diet comprises a wide range of aquatic vegetation and animal food like fish, molluscs, frogs and crustaceans. It is also a very prominent scavenger (Tikader and Sharma 1985). Adults feed on other softshells, turtles and waterfowl too (Daniel 2002). The present observation indicates that this giant turtle can kill big sized terrestrial birds like *Pavo cristatus* and can predate on them if the opportunity is available.

August 25, 2003

SATISH KUMAR SHARMA  
Phulwari Wildlife Sanctuary,  
Kotra 307 025, Udaipur district,  
Rajasthan, India.